

Children and Youth with Special Health Needs News

September 2026

CYSHN updates

Upcoming CYSHN local public health workshops

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has opened registration for the final in-person [2026 Children and Youth with Special Health Needs Local Public Health Workshops](#).

The purpose of these workshops is to bring together local public health professionals to connect, share best practices, and explore solutions to today's public health challenges and our theme is "Equipped for the Future: Tools and Resources for CYSHN Outreach."

- **Southwest workshop:** Wednesday, Oct. 7 at the Lyon County Southwest Health and Human Services Office in Marshall. (Register by Monday, Sept. 14)
- **Northeast workshop:** Tuesday, Oct. 20 at the St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services - Duluth Government Services Center. (Register by Monday, Sept. 21)



MEDSS updates

MEDSS version 6 upgrade training

At the end of September, the Minnesota Electronic Disease Surveillance System (MEDSS) will be upgraded to version 6. All MEDSS users should have received an email on Sept. 2 with a link to the MEDSS 6 upgrade training developed by MDH's MEDSS operations team.

This training is optional and you can page through it freely. It's meant to review the major changes that will be coming to MEDSS 6. The major difference between MEDSS 5 and 6 is

the look and layout. The main functionalities of MEDSS you use to do your work will remain the same. The CYSHN local public health [MEDSS User Manual](#) will have updated screenshots and information relevant to CYSHN local public health work.

It's also important to note that the audience for this training is all MEDSS users. It is not specific to local public health and covers some functionalities in MEDSS that you likely do not use.

If you did not receive an email to review the training materials or have questions, please contact health.cyshn@state.mn.us.

Deactivating inactive MEDSS accounts

To add another layer of security, MEDSS accounts that have not been logged into for six months or longer will be deactivated. Starting in October, the CYSHN informatics team will run monthly checks and deactivate any inactive accounts.

If you have not logged into your MEDSS account in a while and your job responsibilities still require MEDSS access, please remember to log into your account regularly. Leaving your account unattended leaves your account vulnerable to potential breaches.

If your account gets deactivated and you still require MEDSS access or if you need assistance logging in to your account, please contact Dana Janowiak at dana.janowiak@state.mn.us.

Program updates

New CMV fact sheets now available



Redesigned fact sheets about cytomegalovirus (CMV) for people who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant and for childcare workers are now available. Each fact sheet provides clear, practical steps to reduce the risk of CMV infection, along with key information about transmission and prevention. These materials are designed for easy sharing with families, clients, and partner organizations.

The updated fact sheets are available in English, Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. The fact sheet for pregnant people is also available in Karen. You can find the pregnant person fact sheet at the [Cytomegalovirus](#)

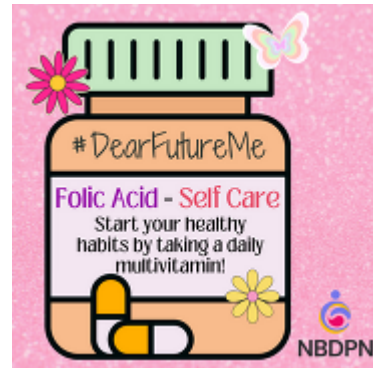
[and Congenital Cytomegalovirus](#) webpage and the childcare fact sheet at the [Information for Child Care and Education Professionals](#) webpage under "Resources."

Print copies of the CMV half sheet, which matches this redesign, are available through the [CMV Materials Order Form](#).

September awareness activities

Folic Acid Awareness Week

Folic Acid Awareness Week is September 13–19. The National Birth Defects Prevention Network offers free materials on its [National Folic Acid Awareness Week](#) webpage to help raise awareness about how folic acid can reduce the risk of neural tube defects. Many resources are available in both English and Spanish. Folic acid is also WIC's [topic of the month \(PDF\)](#), providing an additional opportunity to reinforce consistent messaging about folic acid with families statewide.



National Sickle Cell Awareness Month

September is [National Sickle Cell Awareness Month](#). The Minnesota Sickle Cell Foundation's [Warrior Stories](#) series shares lived experiences from Minnesotans with sickle cell disease, with a new story coming this month. Additional tools and information are available on the campaign webpage.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Month



September is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Awareness Month. Proof Alliance offers educational materials and the FASD Awareness Challenge throughout the month. Visit the Proof Alliance [FASD Awareness Month](#) webpage for resources and ways to participate.

Upcoming webinars, trainings, and events

Regional systems gatherings

Join MDH for a series of in-person regional gatherings across Minnesota during summer and fall 2026 for [Supporting Well-Functioning Systems for CYSHN and Families](#). These

conversation-based gatherings will bring together partners from across health and related systems to reflect on what helps systems work well within each region, where families experience challenges or disconnection, and how systems can become more coordinated and supportive for children and youth with special health needs and disabilities and their families.

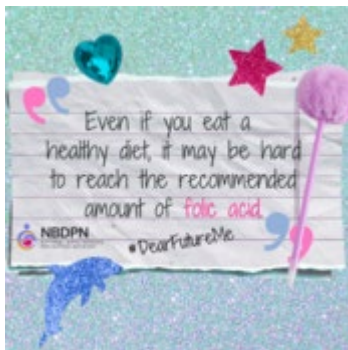
Next regional gathering dates

All gatherings will take place from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. and will include lunch.

- **Tuesday, Sept. 15:** Southwest (Mankato)
- **Thursday, Oct. 8:** Southeast (Rochester)
- **Thursday, Oct. 29:** Metro North (Brooklyn Center)

Complete the [Regional Systems Gatherings Registration](#) form to attend.

Sept. 17 – Dear Future Me: Lifelong Benefits of Folic Acid



Join MDH and the National Birth Defects Prevention Network for [Dear Future Me: Lifelong Benefits of Folic Acid](#) on Thursday, Sept. 17 from noon to 1 p.m. During this multidisciplinary webinar, panelists will share examples of initiatives to increase folate and folic acid intake, discuss promising approaches and implementation challenges, and highlight practical takeaways for professionals working to improve maternal and infant health.

Sept. 27 – Step Up for Down Syndrome Minnesota

[Step Up for Down Syndrome](#) is Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota's signature fundraising and community building event, held every year as a kickoff to Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October. Nearly 5,000 people join each year at Como Park in St. Paul, MN, to celebrate the Down syndrome community, raise awareness, and to raise funds to further their mission. Everyone is invited!

Dec. 2 – CYSHN condition follow-up community of practice

Please register for the next virtual, optional CYSHN condition follow-up community of practice on Wednesday, Dec. 2 from 9-10:30 a.m. The purpose of these meetings is to provide routine opportunities for local public health nurses who provide follow-up for children referred by CYSHN programs (birth defects, hearing loss, heritable conditions, congenital CMV) to learn condition-specific information and discuss nursing practice.

December's session will include a presentation about congenital CMV updates. This meeting will be recorded. If you have any questions you would like to submit in advance, email them to health.cyshn@state.mn.us with "local public health" in the subject line.

Resource corner

Need a refresher on newborn screening?

The [MN Rare Disease Advisory Council ECHO December 18, 2025 - Overview of Newborn Screening in Minnesota](#) recording is a great way for local public health to learn the basics of newborn screening in Minnesota.

Share back-to-school tips for reducing chemical exposures

Back-to-school season is a good time to help families learn simple ways to reduce children's exposure to potentially harmful chemicals in everyday products. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Toxic Free Kids program has a new back to school campaign information sheet with practical tips for families:

- [Back to School Campaign Information Sheet \(English\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [Back to School Campaign Information Sheet \(Hmong\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [Back to School Campaign Information Sheet \(Somali\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [Back to School Campaign Information Sheet \(Spanish\) \(PDF\)](#)

Invoicing

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Jan. 1 - March 31	April 1 - June 30	July 1 - Sept. 30	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31

Condition Follow-up

Complete nursing follow-up documentation in MEDSS by the end of the quarter after the one in which the referral was made. For example, if the date the event was sent to local public health is July 15 (in quarter 3), the follow-up documentation should be submitted by Dec. 31 (the end of quarter 4).

Invoice letters are sent to local public health by MDH in the month following the end of the quarter in which documentation was submitted, or training was completed. So, in the example, the invoice letter would be sent to local public health some time before Jan. 31 (the month following the end of quarter 4).

Follow Along Program

Follow Along Program semi-annual data reports are due every 6 months. Data for quarters 1 and 2 are due annually on July 31. Data for quarters 3 and 4 are due annually on January 31. Invoices for quarters 1 and 2 are due each year on August 20. Invoices for quarters 3 and 4 are due each year on February 20. Semi-annual data reports must be received prior to the invoice being paid.

About the CYSHN newsletter

Children and Youth with Special Health Needs (CYSHN) section staff at MDH work together to champion the health and well-being of people living in Minnesota with special health needs and disabilities, from the earliest states of life through transition to adulthood.

As the Child and Family Health Division works to coordinate and collaborate on communication, this newsletter may evolve to include a broader focus, but the following CYSHN programs are the primary focus: Birth Defects; Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI); Heritable Conditions (HC); Congenital Cytomegalovirus (cCMV); Critical Congenital Heart Disease (CCHD); Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS); and the Follow Along Program.